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SUBJECT: NISS CHIEF CALLS ON SENATORS TO REMOVE SUDAN FROM
STATE SPONSORS LIST, SUPPORT UNITY

Classified By: CDA a.i. Mark Asquino, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶11. (S) SUMMARY: At National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) Headquarters, NISS Chief Salah Ghosh expressed frustration that after nine years of NISS cooperation with the CIA, Sudan remains designated as a State Sponsor of Terrorism, and complained that Sudan is "paying a high price" for USG intelligence ties. In a meeting with Codel Isakson (Senator Johnny Isakson (R-Georgia) and Senator Bob Corker (R-Tennessee),) CDA a.i. Mark Asquino and emboffs, he said that although he views USG policy on Sudan "short-sighted" and driven by interest groups like Save Darfur, he is looking to the USG to "be strong and courageous to achieve peace and security in the area." He declared that the purpose of the CPA is to secure a united Sudan, and warned that an independent Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS) would lead to regional instability and disaster for all Sudanese. On Darfur, he blamed the failure of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) on lack of resolve by the USG in addition to ongoing tensions with Chad. Despite his criticism of past USG policy, Ghosh told the Senators that the GoS wants to make a political agreement and "do whatever it takes" in Darfur, including accepting hundreds of NGOs "if they come to help our people." END SUMMARY

TANGIBLE REWARD: REMOVAL FROM THE STATE SPONSOR LIST

¶12. (S) In a May 25 meeting, NISS Chief Ghosh touted NISS's cooperation with the CIA to Senators Isakson and Corker, who are members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and its Subcommittee for Africa, telling the Senators that as a result of nine years of intelligence sharing, "we have saved lots of American lives in the region and in the Middle East." Senator Isakson thanked Ghosh for NISS's cooperation and efforts to arrest terrorists. Ghosh replied that he appreciates the Senators' thanks, but said that NISS wants a "tangible reward" for its cooperation with the CIA: removal of Sudan from the list of designated State Sponsors of Terrorism." There is no reason for the GoS to be listed insisted Ghosh, who continued that Suan had fully complied with all requirements to be removed.

¶13. (S) Ghosh complained that NISS has faced significant domestic blowback for its cooperation with the CIA, noting that such ties had served to rile domestic critics. "Our politicians call us American agents. Islamists call us "Kafrin" (Infidels). We are paying a high price for doing this. Our right for what we are doing with your intelligence

service is for our name to be lifted (from the list of State Sponsors). If you have disputes with other parts of the Government of Sudan, we should not be victimized."

¶4. (S) Ghosh highlighted NISS actions to stop weapons smuggling in Eastern Sudan. "But some in Washington say we are smugglers." He sought to dismiss speculation that the GoS has facilitated arms smuggling to Hamas, noting that "the Sudanese sympathize with Gaza, and so do I, but we are against weapons smuggling, because they (arms) go to terrorists and we are working with the CIA on that." Ghosh added that the GoS seeks to play a positive role in achieving a stable, strong, central government in Somalia as "all Somalia factions have asked for our help." Senator Isakson said that he appreciates NISS help on terrorism and smuggling, and that he will share Ghosh's comments with the Africa Subcommittee.

"IF SUDAN SEPARATES, THINGS WILL GO BAD"

¶5. (C) Ghosh told the Senators that the goal of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) is about achieving unity between the North and the South. He cautioned that an independent Government of South Sudan, fraught with corruption and security issues, would lead to instability in the region. If the South secedes, there will not be any rest for those in the South and this will affect us." He argued that the end goal of the CPA must be viewed as a unified Sudan. "We should look and think if the region will have security and peace if the South becomes an independent state. If so, we will go for it. If separation will blow-up peace

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and stability in the region, we should look at other solutions. Sudan has to be united".

¶6. (C) The NISS Chief said that the problems in the CPA have not been implementation issues, but "the lack of trust between the partners as they compete for power." He said that the GoS is "ready to correct any lack of implementation of the CPA, but it is very important to note that at the end of the implementation, the idea is to have a united Sudan, and your role is to keep Sudan united." He called on the USG to publicly support the end goal of a united Sudan, arguing that "If there is a decision by the US to support unity, it will influence Southerners and change the spirit completely." He said that if a unified Sudan were to be accepted by all parties, the ongoing disputes over North/South border demarcation and Abyei would lose their significance. "If you want to help us, the US should declare that the US supports unity in Sudan."

¶7. (C) Regarding the US role in the CPA, Ghosh praised the work of former Special Envoy Danforth in negotiating the CPA and ending Sudan's 21 year long civil war, but complained that the USG was "short-sided" and retreated from implementing the agreement "as if achieving peace was the only goal. Your attitude has been to blow-up everything because of your attitude after the Peace Agreement." The CDA agreed with Ghosh that the US had played a major role in forging the CPA and ending one of Africa's longest running civil wars, but he reminded Ghosh that ultimately the success of the CPA will depend on its signatories: the NCP and SPLM. He underscored that the US has not abandoned the CPA, as evidenced by the succession of five US Special Envoys, and the current heavy engagement of General Gration to advance full CPA implementation and end conflict and human suffering in Darfur. Senator Isakson also confirmed that the US Senate is engaged on Sudan, noting that he and Senator Corker arrived only three weeks after the last Congressional Delegation led by Senator John Kerry. Senator Isakson added that "We all would like to see a united Sudan," but warned that "If there is separation, and the intermediate steps are not accomplished, a regional conflict can happen."

¶8. (C) Ghosh lamented that the Darfur Peace Agreement "could have achieved peace, but was abandoned by the US and others, after it was negotiated by Robert Zoellick. He noted: "We complied with the American and European's request and signed on. A political agreement is needed and we are ready to go as far as it takes." CDA Asquino said that the fact the DPA had not resulted in bringing peace to Darfur was a disappointment to all, but its failure was due to non-implementation by the signatories. He added that the DPA's principles could serve as a guide for a future agreement. The NISS Chief insisted that the GoS is eager to resolve the Darfur conflict and make peace with Chad, which he called the main cause of the Darfur conflict. "The Governments of Sudan and Chad must stop any violations of their borders by groups targeting the other country. If you are ready to achieve that, we are ready to sign anything. We are keen to achieve peace and stability in the region. We need to be strong and courageous to do it, because it will achieve peace and security in the area. We are ready to do that today, not tomorrow."

9.(C) Senator Isakson emphasized that the primary concern in the US is the humanitarian situation in Darfur. He said that following the expulsion of thirteen NGOs on March 4/5, "What you have done to reinstate many of the NGOs is a positive step." Ghosh replied that the GoS will continue to allow new NGOs to operate in Sudan, if they do not engage in political activities. "If NGOs come to help our people, we will accept hundreds of NGOs. We are open to accept any NGOs that follow their mandate." He defended the March expulsions by lambasting US policy toward foreign NGOs in the United States, charging that the FBI had expelled many non-political, legitimate Islamic NGOs after the 9/11/2001 terrorist attacks. "That is the national security of the United States, and every country has that responsibility." Senator Corker pointed out that the NGO expulsions by Sudan only worsened the already bad public image of the GoS, telling Ghosh "You are your own worst enemy on Darfur." Ghosh

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admitted, "We have problems in Darfur. We are part of the problem in Darfur. We want your help in Darfur." Senator Isakson advised Ghosh that "It would make a big difference to express this publicly." He added that if one NGO is violating its mandate, the GoS should "not castigate all of them."

¶10. (C) Ghosh charged that USG policies in Darfur were designed to "satisfy certain voices in the US and Europe." He argued that a peace settlement in Darfur would not satisfy activist groups in the US, like Save Darfur, which he maintained would only be satisfied with regime-change as such groups are "hostile to the GoS and seek to topple it." He argued regime-change would ultimately lead to a security vacuum far worse than the current situation. "What is next if you topple the GoS? Will there be any stability or security in the region?" He noted, however, that the GoS has optimism about the new track of USG policy toward Sudan. "We begin to feel that there is a change, a new view in the Administration. We have been working hard with past US Governments, but they have closed their doors." Senator Isakson responded that he and Senator Corker "didn't come to assume, we came to learn; not to take direction from any group. on. The CDA also reminded Ghosh that there are many different views on Darfur in the US, and that the Congress listens to all such groups, weighs the information they present, and then makes its own decisions.

¶11. (S) COMMENT: Ghosh's endgame for intelligence cooperation with the USG is Sudan's removal from the list of designated State Sponsors of Terrorism. While he is accurate in stating that the GoS no longer sponsors terrorism and engages in fruitful intelligence cooperation with the US (post has seen

no evidence that Sudan was complicit in weapons smuggling to Hamas,) it is also true that the GoS has been its own worst enemy in engaging in public displays of bad behavior that have hampered its efforts for the designation's removal. As NISS continues to feel domestic heat for its relationship with the USG (primarily from Islamist groups and hardliners within the regime,) it will become harder for Ghosh to justify intelligence sharing with the USG without achieving this tangible reward in exchange. On the CPA, Ghosh's call for a united Sudan declaration by the U.S. ignores the overwhelming support of Southerners for succession. It also belies NISS' own on-again off-again efforts to undermine the GOSS, enflame tensions along the border, and manufacture crises to make separation a frightening specter. Ghosh's comments regarding Save Darfur and the NGO expulsions highlights the failure by many senior figures in the GoS to understand that the regime, not advocacy groups, is ultimately responsible for public perceptions of its role in Darfur. It is positive, however, that Ghosh was willing to admit that the GoS has been a part of the problem, and that it seeks continued engagement by the USG to find a solution to the Darfur conflict. END COMMENT.

ASQUINO